

GENE AUTRY

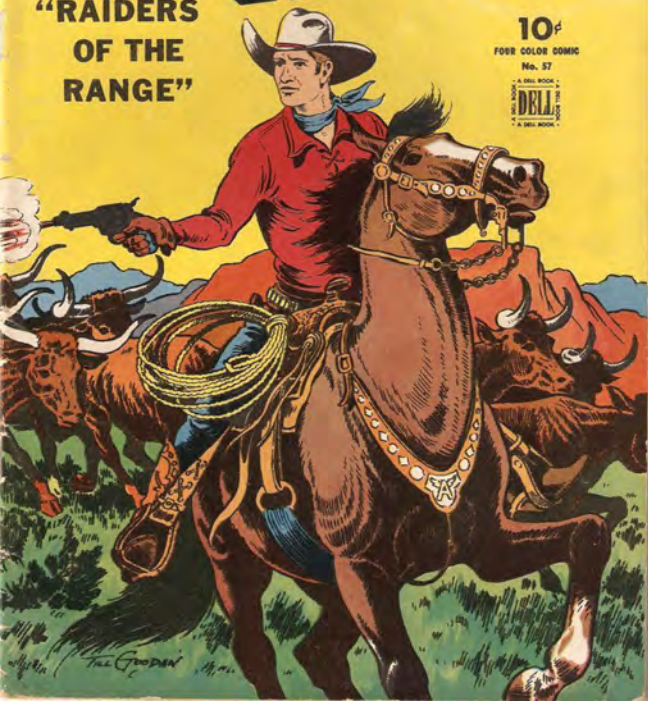
"RAIDERS
OF THE
RANGE"

10¢

FOUR COLOR COMIC

No. 57

A DELL BOOK
DELL
A DELL BOOK



**WEB COMIC
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HERE IS THAT HARD-RIDING,
FAST-SHOOTING ADVENTURER,
GENE AUTRY

IN AN EXCITING STORY OF THE WESTERN PLAINS, WHERE LAWS ARE MADE BY GRIM-EYED MEN AND ENFORCED BY BLAZING SIX-GUNS... WHEN THE ROVING GENE ANSWERS A SUMMONS FROM THE BRAND INSPECTOR AT COTTONWOOD, HE RIDES INTO A BULLET-MARKED ENCOUNTER WITH A DESPERATE GANG OF RAIDERS OF THE RANGE.

GENE FINDS THAT HIS OLD FRIEND, TOM LINDEN, HAS BEEN MURDERED AND THAT HIS RANCH IN FERTILE GREEN VALLEY IS BEING RUINED BY CATTLE RUSTLERS AND COLD-BLOODED KILLERS. GENE MEETS TOM'S PRETTY DAUGHTER, ANNE, AND THE LOYAL RANCH FOREMAN, JIM BAKER. HE ALSO DISCOVERS THAT THE EVIL FORCE BEHIND THE PLUNDERINGS OF GREEN VALLEY



ANNE LINDEN

IS THE SMOOTH AND SHREWD HENRY JENKINS, WHO KILLS, ROBS, AND KIDNAPS TO GAIN HIS ENDS...



JIM BAKER

GENE OUT-RIDES, OUT-SHOOTS AND OUT-WITS JENKINS AND HIS LAWLESS RAIDERS IN A FAST-MOVING STORY, FILLED WITH ROARING GUNS, STAMPEDING CATTLE AND THE VIOLENT STRUGGLES OF MAN AGAINST MAN.



HENRY JENKINS

GENE AUTRY, RAIDERS OF THE RANGE, No. 57
PUBLISHED BY DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC.

149 Madison Ave., New York, 16, N. Y.

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Gene Autry

IN "RAIDERS OF THE RANGE"

IN ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM
THE BRAND INSPECTOR, GENE
AUTRY RIDES INTO THE TOWN
OF GOTTENWOOD.



WONDER WHAT TH INSPECTOR
WANTS WITH ME. HIS LETTER
SOUNDED MIGHTY
URGENT.



MY NAME'S AUTRY.
YOU WROTE YOU
WANTED TO SEE
ME. I CAME AS
FAST AS I COULD
GET HERE.

GOOD! I'M SURE GLAD
TO SEE YOU, AUTRY.
YOUR OLD FRIEND,
TOM LINDEN,
ASKED ME TO
SEND FOR
YOU.



TOM'S HAVIN' A LOTTA TROUBLE WITH
CATTLE RUSTLERS ON HIS RANCH IN
GREEN VALLEY. HE SAID YOU HELPED
HIM SHOOT HIS WAY OUT OF A RUN-
IN WITH BORDER RAIDERS ONCE.
THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HELP HIM
AGAIN.



SURE, I'D BE
GLAD TO HELP
GOOD OLD TOM
ANYTIME..

YOU'LL BE FIGHTIN' A
DANGEROUS GANG!
I SENT A DEPUTY
DOWN THERE A FEW
MONTHS BACK. AINT
HEARD A WORD
FROM HIM
SINCE!



THE
NEXT
MORNING
GENE
AUTRY
RIDES
FOR
GREEN
VALLEY
AND
TOM
LINDEN'S
RANCH

GOOD LUCK, AUTRY! KEEP YOUR
EYES OPEN AN YOUR SIX-GUN
HANDY! LOOKS LIKE SOMEBODYS
TRYIN' TO RUN TOM OFF HIS
RANCH, AN' NOBODY KNOWS
WHO'S
DOIN IT!



WE'D BETTER MOVE FAST, CHAMP!
FROM WHAT TH INSPECTOR SAYS,
THINGS ARE LOOKIN' MIGHTY BAD
FOR OLD TOM!



I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING HASTY BOUT SELLIN' OUT, MISS ANNE. THINGS MAY LOOK BRIGHTER AFTER A WHILE.

I COULDN'T SELL WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT, YOU'RE HALF-OWNER OF THIS RANCH NOW, MR. ATRY!



ME!! HALF-OWNER!

YES, DAD'S WILL LEFT YOU A HALF-INTEREST IN THE TL. SAID HE WAS PAYING A DEBT HES OWED YOU A LONG-TIME. THE OTHER HALF BELONGS TO ME.



ATRY'S SURPRISE AT ANNE'S STARTLING NEWS IS INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF A VISITOR.

WHO'S THAT, MISS ANNE?

HENRY JENKINS. HE OWNS ALL THE LAND AROUND US AND HES BEEN TRYING TO BUY THIS PLACE. BUT DAD WOULDN'T SELL, HE OWNS HALF THE TOWN, TOO.



DONT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT YOUR DAD'S WILL AN' ME BEIN' HALF-OWNER IN TH' RANCH, MISS ANNE.

ALL RIGHT.



THOUGHT I'D RIDE OUT AN' SEE IF THERE WAS ANYTHING I COULD DO FOR YOU, MISS ANNE.

THANKS, MR. JENKINS. MR. ATRY IS AN OLD FRIEND OF DAD'S AND HE IS GOING TO STAY HERE FOR A WHILE AND HELP ME.



GLAD TO HEAR IT, ATRY. MEBBE YOU CAN PERSUADE ANNE TO SELL TH TL. A COW OUTFIT LIKE THIS IS NO PLACE FOR A PRETTY GIRL.

I DONT THINK, MISS ANNE WANTS TO SELL TH RANCH. MR. JENKINS. NOT NOW, ANYWAY.



LATER, AFTER HENRY JENKINS HAS LEFT, ATRY TAKES A PAPER FROM HIS ROCKET AND SHOWS IT TO ANNE

TAKE A LOOK AT THIS REWARD POSTER, ANNE, AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE



WHAT'S THAT AHEAD?
LOOKS LIKE A SKELETON,
HALF-BURIED UNDER THAT
CAVED-IN BANK!



IT IS A SKELETON! WITH A
BULLET HOLE IN ITS SKULL! AN
A DEPUTY'S BADGE BESIDE IT! THIS
MUST BE TH' MAN TH' INSPECTOR
WAS TELLIN' ME
ABOUT!



AT LEAST THIS'LL PROTECT
HIM FROM TH' COYOTES AN'
STORMS, TILL WE CAN COME
BACK AN' GIVE HIM A
DECENT BURIAL.



IT'LL BE GOOD TO SEE OLD TOM AGAIN. WE HAD
SOME MIGHTY EXCITIN' TIMES DOWN ON TH'
BORDER. MAYBE WE'LL HAVE SOME MORE HERE
IN GREEN VALLEY.



AUTRY MEETS ANNE, TOM
LINDEN'S PRETTY DAUGHTER

HE SAID YOU'RE HERE, MR. AUTRY.
BUT YOU'VE-- YOU'VE COME TOO
LATE TO SEE DAD!



TOO LATE! WHAT
DO YOU MEAN,
MISS ANNE?

DAD WAS KILLED...
MURDERED!



HE WAS RIDING FROM TOWN--
ALONE. SOMEBODY SHOT HIM
FROM AN BUSH-- DRYGULCHED
HIM. THE MURDERER GOT AWAY.
DIDN'T LEAVE A TRACE!



SO TOM'S GONE! DON'T
CRY, MISS ANNE. WE'LL
GET THIS KILLER AN'
MAKE HIM PAY FOR
WHAT HE'S DONE!

I WISH I COULD
GO AWAY FROM
HERE-- SELL OUT,
NEVER SEE THE
PLACE AGAIN! WE
HAD NOTHING BUT
TROUBLE FOR THE
LAST MONTHS!



I WOULDN'T DO ANYTHING HASTY BOUT SELLIN' OUT, MISS ANNE. THINGS MAY LOOK BRIGHTER AFTER A WHILE.

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ALL RIGHT.



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TAKE A LOOK AT THIS REWARD POSTER, ANNE, AND TELL ME WHAT YOU SEE





THE NEXT MORNING AUTRY AND ANNE RIDE OVER THE RANCH

THERE'S TH' BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN OUR SPREAD AN' TH' LAZY HJ. HENRY JENKINS' OUTFIT.



LOOK! THERE'S A FULL-GROWN STEER WITH A FRESH BRAND!

IT'S HENRY JENKINS' LAZY HJ BRAND.



I'LL ROPE HIM AN' TAKE A LOOK AT THAT BRAND. SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT A FRESH MARK ON A GROWN STEER!



I'LL HOG-TIE HIM AN' HAVE A LOOK-SEE.



IT IS TH' LAZY HJ BRAND!

YEAH! AN' IT'S BEEN WORKED OVER FROM TH' TL. THIS IS ONE OF YOUR STEERS, ANNE!



SEE HOW EASY IT WAS TO DO! IT WAS TO DO! PROBABLY A LOT OF YOUR BRANDS BEEN CHANGED THIS WAY, ANNE!



WE'LL HAZE THIS FELLOW BACK TO TH' RANCH. HERES OUR PROOF THAT HENRY JENKINS--OR HIS MEN--HAVE BEEN RUSTLIN' YOUR CATTLE AN' RE-BRANDIN' 'EM!

AS AUTRY AND ANNE RIDE TOWARD THE TL RANCH, A HIDDEN GUNMAN OPENS FIRE ON THEM...



THE BULLET STRIKES THE CANTLE OF AUTRY'S SADDLE...



RUN, ANNE! WE HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE IN TH OPEN AGAINST THAT DRYGULCHER!



WE CAN SLOW DOWN NOW. WERE OUT OF HIS RANGE!

WE'VE LOST THE STEER, GENE!



I'LL FIND IT AGAIN! ARE YOU CONVINCED NOW THAT JENKINS IS BEHIND ALL YOUR TROUBLES, ANNE?

YES, GENE. BUT IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE. I ALWAYS LIKED HIM.



EARLY THE FOLLOWING MORNING GENE RIDES OUT TO RECAPTURE THE BRANDED STEER.

I'LL BE BACK SOON AS I FIND HIM.



THAT SURE LOOKS LIKE TH STEER. I'M HUNTING!





IT'S THE ONE I WANT! ALL RIGHT, HE'S BEEN SHOT AN' TH BRAND SKINNED AWAY! WELL, THERE GOES THAT EVIDENCE AGAINST JENKINS!



GENE RETURNS TO THE RANCH AND TELLS ANNE AND JIM ABOUT THE DEAD STEER.

WE'LL HAVE TO DIG UP OTHER PROOF AGAINST JENKINS. AN' WE'VE GOT PLENTY OTHER WORRIES, TOO!

YES, GENE. THE MORTGAGE ON THE TL IS DUE IN A WEEK. AND WE HAVEN'T ANY MONEY!



THE VALLEY CITY BANK OWNS THE MORTGAGE.

THEN THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO. YOU AN' I'LL RIDE INTO VALLEY CITY AN' TALK TH BANK INTO RENEWIN IT.



TWO HOURS LATER GENE AND ANNE RIDE INTO VALLEY CITY

I HOPE MR. ADAMS WILL LISTEN TO US. IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR ALL OUR TROUBLE... AND DAD'S DEATH... WE'D HAVE HAD THE MONEY.



THE BANK DOESN'T OWN THE MORTGAGE NOW, MISS LINDEN. HENRY JENKINS HAS BOUGHT UP ALL THE RANCH MORTGAGES WE HELD. HE REALLY OWNS THE BANK, TOO, YOU KNOW.



HENRY JENKINS!

THAT STOPS ANY RENEWAL, I GUESS.

I'M AFRAID IT DOES, BUT I'D LIKE TO OFFER A SUGGESTION.



OF COURSE, MR. ADAMS, WE'D APPRECIATE ANY HELP YOU CAN GIVE US.



THE CONSTRUCTION COMPANY, BUILDING THE NEW DAM, NEEDS FOOD. YOU MIGHT SELL THEM ENOUGH BEEF TO MAKE THE PAYMENT.



WE'LL GO DOWN THERE PRONTO!

GOOD LUCK TO YOU!

THANKS, MR. ADAMS.

THREE HOURS LATER, AUTRY MAKES A DEAL WITH THE CONSTRUCTION BOSS.

OKAY, MR. AUTRY. YOU DELIVER A HUNDRED HEAD OF FAT STEERS IN SIX DAYS AN' WE'LL PAY CASH ON DELIVERY.



WE'LL START TH' ROUND-UP TOMORROW AN' DELIVER THOSE STEERS AHEAD OF TIME! THEN WE'LL BEGIN DIGGIN' UP PROOF AGAINST JENKINS!
WE'LL BEAT HIM AT HIS OWN GAME!



AT SUN-UP THE NEXT MORNING GENE AND THE OTHERS START FOR THE ROUND-UP.



THAT SAME MORNING, IN HENRY JENKINS' OFFICE IN VALLEY CITY.

GOT NEWS FOR YOU, CHIEF! TH' CONSTRUCTION COMPANY BOSS TOLD ME THAT AUTRY AN' MISS LINDEN MADE A DEAL WITH HIM TO DELIVER A HUNDRED HEAD O' STEERS.



YOU GOTTA STOP 'EM, BOYS! I DON'T AIM TO LET 'EM SELL THOSE STEERS! IM GOIN TO FORECLOSE THAT MORTGAGE... I WANT TH' TL RANCH!



REMEMBER! I'M DEPENDIN' ON YOU!

DON'T YOU WORRY, BOSS! THEY'LL NEVER DELIVER THEM STEERS!



RECKON WE'D BETTER HITAIL OUT TO TH' LAZY HJ AN' GIT TH' BOYS!



LAST NIGHT, AT THE SOUND OF GUNN...

TH' JOBS DONE! A HUNDRED
HEAD OF GOOD FAT STEERS
ALL ROUNDED UP AN' READY
TO GO. WELL, CLOSE HERD 'EM
TOSIGHT AN' TRAIL 'EM DOWN
IN TH' MORNIN'!

TH' BOYS SURE DID A
FAST JOB! YOU GET SOME
REST, ANNE. JIM AN' I'LL
RIDE NIGHT GUARD!



KEEP YOUR EYES AN' EARS OPEN, JIM.
YOU NEVER CAN TELL WHAT AN
HOMBRE LIKE JENKINS
WILL PULL NEXT!



LISTEN, JIM! I HEAR
SOMETHIN' MOVIN'
OUT YONDER!



LOOK OUT!!
STAMPEDE!

YEEOW! YEEOW!







EVERYTHING'S
QUIET SO FAR!

BUT SOMETHING'S LIABE TO BREAK
ANY MINUTE. IF JONAS IS BEHIND
TH' TROUBLE, HE WONT
STOP WITH ONE
ATTACK!

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED
FOR TROUBLE, JIM, WHILE
WERE FORDIN' THIS
RIVER!



MOVE 'EM ALONG
FAST AS YOU
CAN, BOYS!



WAIT 'TIL THEY GET OUT IN TH'
MIDDLE. THEN OPEN UP, BOYS!
AIM FOR AUTRY AN' TH' LEAD
STEER! TH' CURRENTS STRONG,
IT'LL HELP SCATTER 'EM!



READY, BOYS! LET
'EM HAVE IT! GET
AUTRY IF YOU CAN!



AN AMBUSH!
TH' LEAD STEER'S
DOWN!

I'LL RIDE AROUND
'EM AN' TRY TO HOLD
'EM BACK!





STEADY, CHAMP!
THIS CURRENT'S
MIGHTY FAST!



THAT LEAD'S TOO
CLOSE FOR COMFORT!
GUESS WE'LL HAVE
TO SWIM NOW,
BOY!



THIS CURRENT'S CARRYIN'
US DOWNSTREAM FAST!
HEAD FOR SHORE,
CHAMP!



GOOD BOY! THOSE BUSHWHACKERS
ARE STILL SHOOTIN'! MAYBE WE CAN
SNEAK UP BEHIND 'EM!



EASY, CHAMP!
WE'RE GETTIN' CLOSE
TO 'EM!



WE MUSTA GOT
AUTRY. HE'S SURE
DISAPPEARED!

RECKON THEY WON'T
GET *THAT* HERD
TOGETHER
AGAIN!

TH' STEERS
ARE SCATTERED
PLENTY!



IT'S
AUTRY!

RUN FOR
TH' HORSES!

LET'S GET
OUTA HERE
FAST!





WE GOT 'EM HERE ON SCHEDULE!

YOU SURE DID!
A HUNDRED
GOOD PRIME
HEAD!



THERE'S TH' MONEY, AUTRY.
IN CURRENCY, TH' WAY YOU
WANTED IT.

THANKS,
JONES.



ANNE, YOU AN' JIM AN' TH' BOYS
BETTER HEAD BACK FOR TH'
RANCH. I'LL PAY OFF JENKINS.
I WANT TO HAVE A LITTLE
TALK WITH *THAT* HOMBRE!



I'D BET MY **LAST DOLLAR** THAT
JENKINS IS BEHIND ALL OUR
TROUBLES... BUT I GOTTA
FIND SOME WAY OF
PROVIN' IT!



HOWDY,
AUTRY. HOW'S
EVERYTHING
OUT AT TH'
TL?

EVERYTHINGS **FINE!**
I CAME TO PAY OFF TH'
MORTGAGE FOR
MISS ANNE.



I'M GLAD ANNE WAS ABLE TO
MAKE THIS PAYMENT. I HATED
TO FORECLOSE... BUT **BUSINESS**
IS BUSINESS!

IT
SURE **IS**,
JENKINS!



THERE'S YOUR RECEIPT AN' TH'
MORTGAGE PAPERS, AUTRY.
TELL ANNE I'LL BE COMIN'
OUT TO SEE HER SOON.

OKAY... AN'
THANKS!

BY TH' WAY, MISTER JENKINS, YOU EVER BEEN IN BURT COUNTY, MONTANA?

NO! NEVER! WHY?

YOUR FACE LOOKED SORTA FAMILIAR... THAT'S ALL!



YOU AIMIN' TO STAY 'ROUND THESE PARTS VERY LONG, AUTRY?

LONG ENOUGH TO HELP MISS ANNE AN' JIM BAKER GET TH' TL BACK IN GOOD RUNNIN' ORDER. S'LONG, JENKINS.

IF HE IS JONAS, HE KNOWS I SUSPECT HIM NOW.

MAYBE HELL PULL SOMETHIN' THAT'LL GIVE HIM AWAY!



OKAY, BOYS! C'MON IN... HE'S GONE!

YOU TWO SURE HAVE BOTCHED THINGS SO FAR! BUT I'M GOIN' TO GIVE YOU **ONE MORE CHANCE!** YOU GOTTA GET AUTRY THIS TIME! UNDERSTAND?

YEAH, CHIEF! WELL GET HIM!!



HE'S NEW HERE. HE DONT KNOW TH' SHORT-CUT THROUGH GOBLIN PASS. SO YOU CAN CATCH HIM BEFORE HE GETS TO TH' TL. GET TH' MORTGAGE PAPERS, TH' RECEIPT AN' ALL HIS OTHER PAPERS! **BUT DONT KILL HIM!!**

WE DONT WANT ANY MURDERS PINNED ON US NOW. WELL LET TH' SHERIFF DO OUR KILLIN' FOR US... ALL NICE AN' LEGAL! NOW GET GOIN' AN' **MOVE FAST!**







THIS'LL GET HIM!



GOT HIM! JUST LIKE
KETCHIN' LEPPY CALVES
IN A CORRAL!

WHAT...!!



THAT'LL PUT YOU TO
SLEEP FOR A LITTLE
WHILE!



TH' CHIEF CAN'T
COMPLAIN ABOUT
THIS JOB!

SEE IF YOU CAN
FIND ANY MORE
PAPERS.



SURE YOU GOT
EVERYTHING, MONK?

YEP, PICKED HIM
CLEAN AS A
SAGEHEN.
NOW LET'S
HUSTLE
BACK TO
TOWN!



YUH KNOW.. IF JENKINS'D
TURN US IN TO TH' SHERIFF,
WED **BOTH** GET A ROPE
NECKTIE!

WE COULD TALK,
TOO, COULDN'T WE?
WE COULD SPILL
TH' BEANS
ABOUT
JENKINS!



NOBODY'D BELIEVE **OUR**
WORD AGAINST **HIS**... WITH
OUR RECORDS! BESIDES
JENKINS DON'T DO
ANY DIRTY WORK,
HISSELF!

QUIT WORRYIN',
SCAR! JENKINS
AIN'T GOIN' TO
TURN US IN!
I'LL SEE TO
THAT!



WE GOT **EVERYTHING**,
CHIEF! MORTGAGE
PAPERS, RECEIPT
AN' ATRY'S
WALLET!

WE WORE BANDANAS
AN' WORKED **FAST**,
SO'S HE COULDN'T
SEE FOR SURE WHO
WE WERE!

GOOD WORK, BOYS!









HE WON'T. BUT IF HE DOES, YOU CAN BEAT HIM BY TH' SHORT-CUT! TAKE ANNE TO THAT OLD LINE CAMP IN TH' HOLE. AN' HOLD HER TILL I GET THERE. I'LL MAKE HER WRITE A NOTE, GIVIN' TH' TL RANCH TO AUTRY. THAT'LL PIN TH' KIDNAPIN' AN' KILLIN' ON HIM!



CHIEF! YOU DONT MEAN YOU'RE GOIN' TO...

NO! I'M NOT! BUT YOU ARE! KILLIN' NOTHIN' NEW TO YOU, MONK! YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME TO GIVE TH' SHERIFF TH' EVIDENCE OF THAT ONE YOU DID IN LARAMIE. WOULD YOU?



DONT MISS THIS TIME, MONK! WE GOTTA PUT TH' GIRL AN' AUTRY OUTA TH' WAY!

OKAY, CHIEF!



WE'LL RIDE WITH TH' POSSE, SCAR. AN' WE'LL TRY TO HEAD 'EM AWAY FROM TH' DIRECTION OF TH' HOLE AN' TH' TL. TILL MONK'S HAD TIME TO GRAB TH' GIRL. IF YOU SEE AUTRY, SHOOT TO KILL! IT'LL BE LEGAL SINCE YOU'RE IN TH' POSSE!



...AN' HE'S RIDIN' A CHESTNUT HORSE.

YOU CANT MISS HIM, BOYS! TRY TO GET HIM ALIVE, SO'S HE CAN TALK! C'MON!

WE'LL GIT HIM, SHERIFF!



AT THAT SAME MOMENT....

FASTER, CHAMP, FASTER! YOU CAN HAVE A GOOD REST WHEN WE GET TO TH' TL!

WHAT'S TH' MATTER, GENE? WHAT HAPPENED?

WHERE'S JIM, ANNE?



HE'S DOWN ON TH' SOUTH RANGE WITH TH' REST O' TH' BOYS. THEY'RE ROUNDING UP SOME YEARLINGS. WHY?

GET HOLD OF HIM SOONS YOU CAN, ANNE, AN' BRING HIM BACK UP HERE! NOW YOU'VE GOT TO HIDE CHAMP AN' ME QUICK! LISTEN! I'LL TALK FAST!

SO, NATURALLY, TH' SHERIFF BELIEVED HIS STORY. JENKINS IS TH' VALLEY'S LEADIN' CITIZEN AN' TH' SHERIFF NEVER SAW ME BEFORE. JENKINS HAS YOUR MONEY AN' TH' RECEIPT, SO HE CAN FORECLOSE AN' TAKE TH' TL!



BUT HE'S GOT TO GET RID O' ME, SO'S HE CAN HAVE CLEAR SAILIN'. HES PROBL'Y COUNTIN' ON HIS BOYS IN TH' POSSE TO DRILL ME GOOD AN' COLD!

HE MAY TRY TO GET RID O' YOU, TOO, ANNE! THAT'S WHAT'S WORRYIN' ME! HE WON'T WANT TO RUN ANY CHANCES OF YOU SPOILIN' HIS GAME BY PROVIN' TO TH' SHERIFF THAT I AM GENE AUTRY!



I'M BETTIN' THAT HELL TRY SOME 'TRICK MIGHTY SOON. WE GOTTA FIND A WAY TO TURN TH' TRICK BACK ON HIM AN' SHOW TH' SHERIFF WHAT A SKUNK HE IS! NOW, WHERE CAN CHAMP AN' I HIDE?

TH' BARN CELLAR! NOBODY'LL EVER THINK OF LOOKIN' FOR YOU THERE!

FINE!



DAD BUILT THIS NEW BARN ON TH' FOUNDATION OF AN OLD ONE. HE LEFT TH' OLD CELLAR. I USED TO PLAY IN IT WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL. NO ONE KNOWS IT'S HERE. SEE! THERE'S TH' DOOR... BEHIND THESE BUSHES!

YOU COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER HIDE-OUT! THERE'S PLENTY OF ROOM FOR YOU AN' CHAMP AN' THERE'S A HOLE IN TH' BARN FLOOR, SO YOU CAN HEAR WHAT'S GOING ON UP ABOVE YOU!



REMEMBER, ANNE! WHATEVER HAPPENS, PLAY JENKINS' GAME WITH HIM... THAT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE OF PROVIN' WHAT HE IS AN' GETTIN' BACK TH' MONEY AN' TH' RANCH! I'LL STAY CLOSE TO YOU SO NOTHING CAN HAPPEN TO YOU!



I'LL FIND SOME WAY OF LETTING YOU KNOW IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, GENE!



HIVA, MISS ANNE, GOT NEWS FOR YOU!

HELLO, MONK! WHAT IS IT?

YOU ALL ALONE HERE, MISS ANNE?



YES, JIM AND TH' BOYS ARE DOWN ON TH' SOUTH RANGE. WHAT'S TH' NEWS, MONK?



THAT FRIEND O' YOURS, GENE AUTRY, SENT ME TO GET YOU! HE'S HURT BAD! HIS HORSE FELL WITH HIM. TH' BOYS TOOK HIM TO TH' LAZY H J. HE WANTS YOU TO COME PRONTO!

THERE AIN'T TIME TO RIDE DOWN TO TH' SOUTH RANGE, MISS ANNE. AUTRY'S HURT... BAD!

GREAT HEAVENS! I'LL GET JIM AND WE'LL GO RIGHT AWAY!



I'LL GET MY SADDLE AND GO RIGHT AWAY!

LET'S HURRY, MONK! HOW BADLY IS GENE HURT? OH, DEAR, I'M SPILLING THE OATS!

ANNE SCOOPS UP A HANDFULL OF THE SPILLED OATS





SMART GIRL! I HEARD EVERY WORD SHE SAID. SO I'M HURT AND AN HOMBRE NAMED MONK IS TAKIN' HER TO TH' LAZY HJ. ALSO SHE'S SPILLING OATS!



HI, ATRY! WHERE YOU HEADIN' FOR?

THAT'S TH' STORY, JIM! I'M RIDIN' AFTER ANNE. YOU STAY HERE AN' ACT SURPRISED IF TH' POSSE RIDES UP. I'VE SCATTERED MY TRACKS AROUND TH' CELLAR DOOR!



WE'LL TURN DOWN THIS TRAIL, ANNE.

BUT THIS ISN'T TH' TRAIL TO TH' LAZY HJ!



I'D BETTER GAG YOU JEST IN CASE YOU FEEL LIKE YELLIN'! NOW RIDE STRAIGHT AHEAD, SISTER, LIKE I TELL YOU!



AT THE **TL** RANCH

HOWDY, JIM. SEEN ANYTHING OF THAT FELLA NAMED AUTRY?

HOWDY, BOYS. AUTRY HASN'T COME BACK FROM TOWN YET, SHERIFF. WHY?



YOUR **FRIEND**, THAT CALLS HIMSELF GENE AUTRY, HAS VAMOOSED WITH TH' MONEY FOR YOUR STEERS, JIM! HE TRIED TO FRAME **ME!** WERE LOOKIN' FOR HIM!

WHY...THAT DIRTY, THIEVIN' SKUNK!

I'VE BEEN DOWN ON TH' SOUTH RANGE. HE MIGHTA SNEAKED IN. C'MON, BOYS, I'LL HELP YOU LOOK FOR HIM!

THAT'S RIGHT, JIM!



WHERE'S MISS ANNE, JIM?

I DON'T KNOW. SHE ISN'T HERE. PROBABLY WENT FOR A RIDE.

PROBABLY THAT SKUNK GRABBED **HER**, LIKE HE DID TH' **MONEY!**

IF HE DID, I'LL **GET HIM**, IF IT'S TH' LAST THING I EVER DO! C'MON!



AN HOUR LATER

WE'VE SEARCHED EVERY CORNER, AN' HE AIN'T HERE! BUT WE'LL **FIND HIM!** SOME OF TH' BOYS ARE SCOURIN' TH' HILLS NOW!

MY BOYS AN' I'LL START ON A HUNT FOR ANNE. I'M **WORRIED** ABOUT HER!



I'LL CUT ACROSS TO MY RANCH, SHERIFF AN' GET TH' REST O' MY BOYS. WE'LL HELP JIM HUNT FOR MISS ANNE. I DONT WANT ANYTHING TO HAPPEN TO TOM LINDEN'S GIRL!

GOOD IDEA, JENKINS! IF THAT HOMBRE, AUTRY, DID GRAB HER, I WONT TRY TO STOP A LYNCHIN'!

TH' T'GS AS GOOD AS MINE, RIGHT NOW! AN' AUTRY AN' TH' GIRL ARE AS GOOD AS BURIED!



MEANTIME GENE FOLLOWS THE TRAIL OF ANNE AND MONK

ANNE SURE USES HER HEAD! SHE'S OUTA SIGHT, BUT HER TRAIL OF SPILLED OATS IS AS PLAIN AS DAY!

TH' OATS GO DOWN THIS WAY. SO THEY'RE RIDIN' DOWN THIS GULLY!



SO THAT'S WHERE HE TOOK HER! THERE'S HER HORSE! STAY HERE, CHAMP, AN' KEEP QUIET. I'M GOIN' DOWN!



I'M ONLY ABOUT FIVE MINUTES BEHIND HER! NOTHIN' COULDA HAPPENED TO HER YET.

NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT'S GOIN' ON!





WHAT IS IT, MONK?
WHAT ARE YOU
GOING TO DO
TO ME?

YOU'LL FIND OUT WHEN TH'
CHIEF GETS HERE. NO USE
YELLIN'! NOBODY CAN HEAR
YOU DOWN HERE!



TH' CHIEF! IT MUST BE
JENKINS! ANNE'S SAFE
FOR A WHILE, ANYWAY!



ALL I CAN DO
NOW IS WAIT
FOR TH'
CHIEF!



A SHORT TIME LATER

SOMEBODY'S COMIN NOW!
SOUNDS LIKE JUST ONE
HORSE, SO IT CAN'T
BE TH' POSSE!



IT'S JENKINS! SO HE IS TH'
CHIEF! NOW THINGS OUGHTA
START HAPPENIN'!



HENRY
JENKINS!
WHAT DO
YOU WANT
WITH ME?

YOU'LL FIND OUT! WE AIN'T GOT
ANY TIME TO LOSE! TH' POSSE'S
LIABLE TO SHOW UP ANY MINUTE.
I BROUGHT TH' PENCIL AN'
PAPER!



NOW WRITE WHAT I TELL YOU... I HEREBY GIVE
ALL MY RIGHTS IN THE TL RANCH TO MY GOOD
FRIEND, GENE AUTRY... AN
SIGN IT WITH YOUR FULL
NAME!



THERE! I WROTE
IT! NOW CAN I
GO HOME, MR.
JENKINS?

LEAVE TH' PAPER ON
TH' TABLE, MONK! NOW
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'VE
GOT TO DO!! I'LL WAIT
OUTSIDE. MAKE IT
QUICK!





TH' SHERIFF AN' TH' POSSE, PROBABLY. WELL, WERE READY FOR 'EM.



...SO YOU SEE, SHERIFF, WITH ANNE AN' ME OUTA TH' WAY, HE'D CONTROL TH' WHOLE VALLEY. WHEN YOU FOUND THIS PAPER, YOU'D KNOW FOR SURE THAT I KIDNAPED AN' KILLED ANNE! I'D HANG FROM TH' NEAREST TREE, IF I WASN'T ALREADY KILLED!



IF YOU SHAVE OFF HIS MUSTACHE, YOU'LL FIND THAT HE'S HANK JONAS, WANTED IN A DOZEN COUNTIES. AN' YOU'LL PROBABLY FIND ALL TH' PROOF YOU WANT IN HIS SAFE!



THE NEXT DAY

HE IS HANK JONAS, ALL RIGHT. IN HIS SAFE WE FOUND YOUR MONEY, AN' ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO HANG HIM A DOZEN TIMES. AN' MONK CONFESSED THAT HE KILLED YOUR FATHER, ANNE... AT JENKINS' ORDERS... AN' A DEPUTY INSPECTOR... AT JENKINS' ORDERS!



SURE LUCKY FOR ALL OF US YOU CAME DOWN HERE, AUTRY! YOU GOIN' TO STAY AROUND AWHILE?

OF COURSE HE IS! GENE'S HALF-OWNER OF TH' TL RANCH, YOU KNOW.

I CAN'T STAY LONG. AN' I'M DEEDING MY HALF OF TH' RANCH TO YOU TODAY, ANNE. YOU'VE SURE EARNED IT!



COWBOY LINGO



The Cocinero

THE CHUCK WAGON BOSS IS OFTEN CALLED THE 'COCINERO.' THIS IS A SPANISH WORD, PRONOUNCED 'KO-SIN-AIRO,' AND MEANS 'COOK.' IT IS HIS JOB TO SEE THAT THE MEALS ARE READY WHEN THE 'HANDS' ARE OUT ON ROUND-UP. HE DRIVES THE CHUCK-WAGON AS

IT MOVES FROM ONE ROUND-UP POINT TO ANOTHER AND IS BOSS OF THE KITCHEN WHEN THE OUTFIT IS WORKING AT THE HOME RANCH. MANY OF THE LARGER OUTFITS HAVE A COOK'S HELPER WHO PEELS POTATOES, WASHES DISHES, GATHERS WOOD, TENDS THE

COOKING FIRES, HITCHES UP THE TEAM WHEN THE WAGON IS READY TO MOVE AND MAKES HIMSELF GENERALLY USEFUL. HE IS CALLED THE 'BULL-COOK.' THE COCINERO IS USUALLY AN OLD COWBOY WHO HAS A KNACK FOR COOKING BUT TOO 'STOVE-UP' TO WORK AS A COW-HAND.



Brushed Up

MANY SADDLE HORSES HAVE A HABIT OF HIDING IN THICK BRUSH OR IN A CANYON WHEN THE HORSE WRANGLER IS LOOKING FOR THEM. WHEN THIS OCCURS THE COWBOY SAYS THEY ARE 'BRUSHED UP.' A WISE OLD BELL-MARE WILL STAND PERFECTLY STILL SO THE BELL WON'T RING.

Snubbin' Post

HORSE BREAKING CORRALS HAVE A STRONG CEDAR POST IN THE CENTER. IT IS CALLED THE 'SNUBBIN' POST.' WHEN THE HORSE BREAKER ROPES A BRONC HE TAKES TWO OR THREE TURNS AROUND THIS POST, GRADUALLY TAKING-UP THE SLACK UNTIL HE CAN HALTER THE HORSE.



Irons

A COWMAN OFTEN REFERS TO HIS BRAND AS HIS 'IRON' OR HIS 'MARK.' BRANDS ARE SOMETIMES HIGHLY ORIGINAL IN DESIGN. IT IS ILLEGAL TO BRAND AN ANIMAL UNLESS THE IRON HAS BEEN REGISTERED IN THE BRAND INSPECTOR'S OFFICE.

The Jingler

THE HORSE-WRANGLER IS FREQUENTLY CALLED THE 'JINGLER,' PROBABLY BECAUSE HE HAS AN OLD MARE IN THE BUNCH WEARING A BELL AND THE JINGLING OF THIS BELL CAN BE HEARD WHEN HE RUNS THE REMUDA INTO THE ROUND-UP CAMP.





Grubliner

DURING THE SLACK SEASON BETWEEN ROUND-UPS ALL OF THE EXTRA COWBOYS ARE "LAID OFF." MANY OF THEM DRIFT FROM ONE OUTFIT TO ANOTHER. THEY ARE KNOWN AS "GRUBLINERS" AND ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO STAY A FEW DAYS. THE COWBOY IS VERY CAREFUL NOT TO OVER-STAY HIS WELCOME...

Jackpot

WHEN A COWBOY GETS HIMSELF INTO TROUBLE, SUCH AS HAVING HIS HORSE JERKED DOWN WHILE ROPING, HE SAYS HE IS IN A "JACKPOT," A "STORM," OR A "TIGHT"...



The Rough String

MOST BIG COW-OUTFITS EMPLOY A COWBOY WHO DOES NOTHING BUT BREAK HORSES. THESE "UN-BROKE" HORSES ARE KNOWN AS THE "ROUGH STRING." THEY ARE USUALLY STARTED WHEN THEY ARE FOUR-YEAR-OLDS...

Jughead

THE MORON OF THE HORSE WORLD IS KNOWN AS A "JUGHEAD" OR "KNOHEAD." HE GOES THROUGH LIFE BREAKING "DIDDLE REINS" AND HALTER ROPES. HE DOESN'T GOT AN OUNCE OF BRAINS...



Cowpuncher

WHEN MOVING CATTLE THROUGH CHUTES FROM ONE CORRAL TO ANOTHER, OR INTO CATTLE CARS, THE COWBOY HAS A "PROD POLE" WHICH HE USES TO PUNCH THE CATTLE ALONG. THIS IS THE WAY HE GOT THE NAME "COWPUNCHER"...



GENE AUTRY

IN "The Mystery of the Diamond-A"

WHEN GENE AUTRY STARTS TO INVESTIGATE THE MYSTERIOUS HORSE STEALING AT THE DIAMOND-A RANCH, HE FINDS HIMSELF MIXED-UP IN A DANGER-PACKED STRUGGLE WITH A GANG OF DESPERATE HORSE THIEVES...

IT ALL BEGINS THE DAY GENE RIDES IN THE ROPEO AT SEVEN PINES...



STEVE KENDALL and BILL GANTEE
OWNERS OF THE
DIAMOND-A HORSE RANCH



BUD LOSER
FOREMAN OF
THE DIAMOND-A



THAT FELLA SURE CAN RIDE! WHO IS HE?

NAME'S GENE AUTRY. HE'S A STRANGER AROUND HERE. HE RODE IN AN' SIGNED UP FOR TH' SHOW.



I UNDERSTAND THIS AUTRY'S GOT A BIG REPUTATION FOR LONE-WOLFIN' IT AROUND TH' COUNTRY AN' FIGHTIN' ON TH' SIDE O' TH' LAW.

I'VE HEARD OF HIM! AN' I SURE WANT TO TALK TO HIM!



MY NAME'S STEVE KENDALL, AUTRY. I'M HALF-OWNER OF TH' DIAMOND-A RANCH.

I'VE BEEN HEARIN' ABOUT TH' DIAMOND-A. YOU BREED FINE QUARTER HORSES, DONT YOU?



YES. WERE RAISIN' 'EM FOR TH' GOVERNMENT. I WONDER IF YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN TH' JOB OF RANCH FOREMAN!

WHY...ER... I DONT KNOW. THIS IS SORT O' SUDDEN.

I'VE BEEN WATCHIN' YOU ALL DAY. YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO HANDLE HORSES... AN' **MEN!** WE NEED SOMEBODY LIKE YOU ON TH' RANCH!



WE WERE GETTIN' ALONG FINE TILL... ALL OF A SUDDEN... WE BEGAN TO LOSE OUR BEST HORSES! THEY'RE BEING **STOLEN RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES!** AN' TH' THIEVES DONT LEAVE A TRACK!



IF WE DONT STOP TH' THIEVIN', WE'LL **GO BROKE!** SO THINK OVER TH' JOB, AUTRY... UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU'RE HEADIN' SOME OTHER PLACE.

I'M NOT HEADIN' ANYWHERE IN PARTICULAR. I JUST HAPPENED TO BE RIDIN' THROUGH SEVEN PINES AN' SAW TH' **RODEO**. SO I STOPPED.



I'LL TAKE THAT JOB, KENDALL! I LIKE HORSES AN' I LIKE TH' IDEA OF **TRYIN' TO TRACK DOWN THOSE RUSTLERS!**



WE'LL RIDE IN AN' TALK TO MY PARTNER, BILL SANTEE. BILL AN' I BOTH HAVE OFFICES IN TOWN. HE OWNS A FREIGHT LINE AN' I OWN TH' GENERAL STORE IN TOWN. TH' **FOREMAN** RUNS TH' RANCH.



BILL AN' I KEEP BUSY IN TOWN. WE DONT HAVE MUCH TIME TO SPEND ON TH' RANCH. THAT'S WHY A **GOOD FOREMAN'S** SO IMPORTANT!



THIS IS MY PARTNER, BILL SANTEE, AUTRY. BILL, MEET **GENE AUTRY!** I'VE JUST HIRED HIM AS FOREMAN OF TH' RANCH!

BUT WHAT ABOUT **BUD LOSER?** HE'S A GOOD FOREMAN!



BUD'S NO GOOD AS A FOREMAN... AN' **YOU KNOW IT, BILL!** IF HE LOSES ANY MORE OF OUR BEST HORSES, WE'LL LOSE TH' RANCH!

BUT HE'S ONLY BEEN THERE A SHORT TIME...















HERE'S TH' WHOLE BUNCH, BUD!

GOOD! AN' YOU SURE DID A SWELL JOB O' CUTTIN' THAT SADDLE RIGGIN'! AUTRY CAN'T WALK A STEP!



WE'LL SNEAK THESE HORSES OUT TONIGHT. THEY'LL BE GONE WHEN THAT HORSE BUYER GETS HERE IN TH' MORNIN'! TH' LOSS O' THIS BUNCH WILL BREAK KENDALL. HELL HAFTA SELL OUT!



YOU BOYS'LL HAVE TO MANAGE TH' DEAL TONIGHT. I'LL STAY WITH AUTRY! I'VE SENT CHRIS FOR TH' DOC... TO MAKE THINGS LOOK RIGHT! BUT CHRIS AINT GOIN' TO HURRY AND TH' DOC WONT GET 'HERE 'FORE MORNIN'!



THAT NIGHT CANT UNDERSTAND WHAT'S KEEPIN' CHRIS AN' TH' DOC! THEY OUGHTA BEEN HERE LONG AGO!

SURE WISH THEY'D HURRY! THIS PAIN IN MY LEG IS GETTIN' WORSE!



WHAT'S THAT NOISE OUTSIDE, BUD?

WHAT NOISE? I DON'T HEAR NOTHIN'!



SOUNDED LIKE HORSES. ...OUCH! MY LEG!

RECKON I'D BETTER GO TAKE A LOOK!



I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, AUTRY, SOONS I LOOK AROUND!







LUCKY FOR ME THOSE HORSES ARE MILLIN' AROUND AN' MAKIN' PLENTY O' NOISE!



A GOOD JOB, BOYS! BOB AN' EDLL DRIVE 'EM OVER TH' STATE LINE TOMORRA NIGHT! SANTEE'LL PAY US ALL A BONUS FOR THIS DAYS WORK!



NOW YOU BOYS KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOIN' TO DO! TOMORRA, WHEN SANTEE AN' TH' HORSE BUYER AN' KENDALL COME OUT, TH' STORY IS WE CHASED TH' RUSTLERS BUT LOST THEIR TRAIL AN' HAD TO COME BACK.

WE KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

BUT WHAT ABOUT **AUTRY**, BUD?



IF HE AINT' ALREADY DEAD WHEN WE GET BACK, I'LL TAKE CARE OF HIM... AN' MAKE IT LOOK LIKE HE DIED ON ACCOUNT OF HIS FALL!



I'D BETTER GET OUTA HERE AN' BEAT 'EM BACK TO TH' RANCH!



GET MOVIN', BOY! WE'RE GOIN' BACK AN' FIX UP A **BIG SURPRISE** FOR BUD!



HERE WE ARE, RIGHT WHERE WE STARTED FROM. NOW I GOTTA HUNT UP THAT CHINEESE COOK!



STICKEE UP, MISSEE!
WING HERE.
NO NEED HUNT!

WING!





HERE YOU ARE! NICE AN' COZY IN YOUR OWN ROOM! AN' HERE YOU'LL **STAY** FOR A WHILE!



THAT'LL HOLD **YOU**, MR. BULLET-WING! NOW I'D BETTER GET MOVIN'!



GENE THEN RETURNS TO HIS OWN ROOM

THAT PHONEY CHINESE COOK'LL BE READY TO TALK PLENTY, WHEN TH' SHERIFFS READY TO **LISTEN**!



HERE THEY COME **NOW!** I'D BETTER GET IN BED **PRONTO!**



AUTRY!
ARE YOU AWAKE?



HE MUSTA **PASSED OUT!**
NOW'S TH' TIME TO FINISH TH' **JOB...**



PUT UP YOUR HANDS, BUD! YOUR LITTLE GAMES **ALL OVER!**

AUTRY!!
WH-WHHH...





